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News Release

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Last of 3 Twin Cities men sentenced for conspiracy to distribute cocaine

The last of three north metro area men was sentenced yesterday in federal court for possessing with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of cocaine.

On May 19 in Minneapolis, United States District Court Judge David Doty sentenced Antonio Ortiz Shinaul, 32, Brooklyn Park, to 33 months in prison and four years of supervised release on one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of cocaine.

Michael Allen Barthel, 26, Blaine, was sentenced on May 18 to 30 months in prison and four years of supervised release on one count of conspiracy. Arthur Jamar Griffin, 30, Brooklyn Park, was sentenced on April 27 to 120 months in prison and eight years of supervised release on one count of conspiracy.

All three defendants were indicted on Oct. 20, 2008. Shinaul pleaded guilty on Dec. 15, 2008, and Barthel pleaded guilty on Dec. 3, 2008. Griffin was convicted by a jury on Jan. 13.

According to Barthel's and Shinaul's respective plea agreements, they admitted conspiring to possess and distribute 3 kilograms of cocaine and also admitted intending to distribute it.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, authorities arranged a controlled sale of cocaine on Sept. 30 at the Wal-Mart in West St. Paul. The three defendants were arrested following the transaction. While the arrest was occurring, Griffin took the money from the vehicle, hid it under his shirt and attempted to flee.

This case was the result of an investigation by the DEA. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas M. Hollenhorst.

